

Chapter Five

FINDINGS

5.1 Role of Findings in Plan Development

Information gathered to define VMP context and to assess the existing resource reveals key themes which vegetation management at Lincoln Park needs to address. While none is particular only to Lincoln Park, the combination of factors is unique. The findings listed below raise focal issues, which in turn corroborate established goals and define vegetation management objectives for the plan. Chapter 6, which follows, provides specific recommendations to fulfill these objectives, area by area within the park.

5.2 Specific Findings and Issues

Finding: Native Character

Lincoln Park's vegetation includes a dominant component of high quality, beautifully-sited native forest which provides significant wildlife habitat and rich user experiences.

Issue:

Preservation and enhancement of this valuable natural legacy in the face of disturbances affecting a heavily-visited urban forest.

Finding: Non-native Plants

Native and exotic plant species commingle extensively in the park, notably as groves of introduced trees and beds of mixed shrubbery.

Issue:

Preserving the unusual experience non-native trees in a forested setting and a rich palette of shrub species, while dealing with growth environment and invasiveness problems.

Finding: Invasive Species

Invasive plants occupy significant understory area, primarily as blanketing/climbing ivy and shrub-trees like holly and English laurel; additional invasive and noxious weed species have infested the park less extensively or in open areas only.

Issue:

Elimination of invasive plants which outcompete native understory, and noxious weed eradication.

Finding: Compacted Soils

Soil compaction is severe in heavily-used park areas, with increased hazard tree potential.

Issue:

Reversing compaction and managing tree population to minimize failure risk in high use areas.

Finding: Tree Disease

Disease has visibly affected – and in several cases killed – existing trees in diverse areas of the park, most notable Lawson cypress, Ponderosa pine and Madrona.

Issue:

Disease management to minimize loss of desirable mature canopy and replenish gaps.

Finding: Drainage Problems

Drainage deficiencies exist in lawn areas as well as along bluff edge where limited erosion from overland flow is visible.

Issue:

Remediating poor drainage in turf and water flowing onto steep, unstable slopes.

Finding: Social Trails

Social trails are numerous throughout forested park areas, with likely consequences including vegetation fragmentation, wildlife disturbance, increased invasive plant and soil-borne disease introduction, and user disorientation.

Issue:

Preserving intact blocks of native vegetation, repairing discontinuities and identifying ways to foster utilization of official trail system.

Finding: User Safety

Safety and security problems are perceived to exist by certain park users, and corroborated by staff; confusing trails and dense vegetation may contribute to such perceptions.

Issue:

Discerning whether and how vegetation management can reduce actual and perceived danger, in concert with trail system evaluation.